

APRIL 2006

MONTANA GEAR UP

GAINING EARLY AWARENESS & READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

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Director's Message by Sandy Merdinger

Making the difference: This last month I've had some wonderful opportunities to see and hear how many of you are making a difference. Thank you so much for your good work! In the March newsletter, I said that good data is so important to tell our story. But it is also good to hear stories of people who are making a difference for students. The graduation speakers for Browning High School this year are Melanie Magee and Kari Belcourt. Melanie is Browning's GEAR UP liaison, and for prior years of GEAR UP both Melanie and Kari were the GEAR UP liaisons working with the cohort students. What a tribute to their great work! As mentioned in a March 16th *Glacier Reporter* article about the President's elimination of GEAR UP from this year's budget, not only is GEAR UP helping more high school graduates enroll in college, but according to counselor Matthew Johnson, "The college retention rate is also improving as students are better equipped to be successful, thanks to programs like GEAR UP." There is no doubt that the countless hours Melanie and Kari spent working directly with students and also behind the scenes with administration, teachers, parents and others to improve opportunities for their students, has made a difference for Browning Public School students. Congratulations, Melanie and Kari, on this honor!

Last week I attended the annual Montana Indian Education Association conference. It was such an honor to spend time with so many people making a difference in the lives of so many American Indian children across Montana. This conference was especially energizing and upbeat because some real steps have been taken to improve not only the education of American Indians but also all Montana students. The funding appropriated during the last legislative session to begin implementing Montana Indian Education for All is already making a difference. Thanks go to Rep. Carol Juneau and Rep. Norma Bixby for their tireless work for many years to lead the charge to provide the necessary funding to implement the Constitutional mandate of Indian Education for All Montanans. I hope that all of our GEAR UP schools take advantage of the opportunities for all of our students to start learning more about the essential understandings of American Indians. Remember that this summer Montana GEAR UP will support two (and in some cases more) participants to attend the Indian Education for All Institute in Missoula or the Battling for Survival workshop in Billings. Check with Linda Safty if you have questions on these professional development activities.

There are so many other stories of people making a difference for Montana students. Thanks to all of you for your commitment and good work!

Montana GEAR UP Advisory Committee

The Montana GEAR UP Advisory Committee had its first meeting of the new grant cycle on Wednesday, March 22nd. The purpose of the advisory committee is to provide a field perspective on Montana GEAR UP and offer feedback and input on programmatic components and overall program direction.

Selected to sit on the committee for the 2005-2006 school year are the following: Melanie Magee, Browning Liaison; Betty Stickel, Charlo Counselor & Liaison; Jim Mephram, Dutton/Brady Principal; Arlene Bigby, Nashua Superintendent; Joel Voytoski, Evergreen Superintendent; Peggy Fredericks, Lame Deer Counselor; and Kevin Barsotti, Box Elder Counselor.



Five of the seven members were able to attend the March meeting, and the feedback received was thoughtful and valuable. We look forward to working with the Montana GEAR UP Advisory Committee members in the future. Thank you!

Inside this issue:

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

MONTANA GEAR UP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1

GEAR UP SPOTLIGHT: BOX ELDER SENIOR TRIP

MOUNTAIN WEST BANK TWO YEAR SCHOLARSHIP

APRIL REMINDERS

2

MGSLP ESSAY CONTEST

WELCOME SHARON HEIGH

EVALUATION UPDATE

3

2006 SUMMER PROGRAMS

GEAR UP STAFF DIRECTORY

4

The GEAR UP Spotlight: Box Elder Schools

Box Elder Senior College Visit by Ira Eagleman, Senior



Box Elder Senior Ira Eagleman with Chelsey Buck and Sharlene Yellowtail

At about 6:45am the Box Elder School seniors set out on a trip to Missoula.

Shortly after arriving in Missoula, we were on a schedule. First, we checked out the University of Montana's west campus. It's an Industrial Arts school where you get a lot of hands-on-training. So if you are a hands-on type of person, this could be a field you could go into.



After touring the west campus, we headed over to the east campus. This place has a lot to offer if you are interested in the field of business. A majority of these fields require computer knowledge. Next on the list was the main campus, or as some like to call it, the Mountain Campus. To our surprise, we met up with one of our very own past Box Elder graduates, Ashley Haley. She tells us that it has been a great challenge for her there and that she hopes that some of us will consider continuing our education at UM.

The next morning we headed to Salish Kootenai College (SKC). We toured the main campus and talked to the staff people. Another surprise that we had was that we came across another person from our area, Christina Trottier. She offered a piece of advice about the advantages of going to a small school because she was at U of M last year, and just this year she transferred to SKC. If you like small learning environments where you can talk with the instructor one on one and you like mountainous landscapes, SKC is the place for you.

We also visited the Nine Pipes Museum. It was an awesome tour. All in all, the whole trip was a fun learning experience, and I hope next time more students will consider going to make the experience a better one.

Mountain West Bank Two-Year College Scholarship



Mountain West Bank has recently announced a new scholarship opportunity available to students! The Montana Mountain West Bank Two-Year College Scholarship Program is committed to providing financial assistance to exemplary students who are either currently enrolled or admitted to one of Montana's two-year colleges or programs (Colleges of Technology, Community Colleges, Tribal Colleges, MSU Northern and UM Western). Two (2) scholarships valued at \$1,000 will be awarded to full-time students with a minimum GPA of 2.5 for the most recently completed semester/quarter of high school or college.

This is another great opportunity for your students to offset the cost of their education. For more information or to obtain an application form, visit www.mtfastereducation.com.

April Reminders

- Deadline for application to Montana GEAR UP for National GEAR UP Conference participation is April 14. Visit the Montana GEAR UP website (www.gearup.montana.edu) for more information.
- Montana School Counselors Association Spring Institute is April 20-21 in Bozeman. For more information, visit www.mtschoolcounselor.org.
- Budget amendment deadline is May 1.
- Montana GEAR UP Spring Liaisons Meeting is May 2-3 in Helena. Call the Holiday Inn Helena Downtown at (406) 443-2200 for a room for the night of the 2nd. Ask for the Montana GEAR UP rate of \$64.00 plus tax.
- Montana GEAR UP Final Program Reports and 2006-2007 Implementation Plans are due June 16.
- Spotlight articles for the May newsletter are due April 14th and can be sent to Cyrus Malkin at cmalkin@oche.montana.edu.
- This newsletter can also be viewed on our website (www.gearup.montana.edu).
- If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter, send his or her information to Cyrus Malkin at cmalkin@oche.montana.edu.
- "Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love!" - Sitting Bull



Montana GEAR UP 2006 Middle School Camp

At-A-Glance

Sponsor	Carroll College	Dawson Community College	Miles City CC	MSU-Bozeman
Location	Helena	Glendive	Miles City	Bozeman
Camp Name	Outdoor Science Camp	DCC + ME = Discovery	Summer Discovery 2006	Engineering Camp
Camp Theme	Studying the environment through natural science field studies and research.	A fun GEAR UP Learning Adventure helping you Discover College and Career – a chance to experience all aspects of a college semester.	Exploring the culture and times of the Lewis and Clark expedition, Then & Now	Applying engineering, math, and science to real world problems.
Dates	July 23-29	June 11-17	June 12-15	July 30-Aug 4
Camp Length	7 days/6 nights	7 days/6 nights	4 days/3 nights	6 days/5 nights
Days	Sunday – Saturday	Sunday – Saturday	Monday – Thursday	Sunday – Friday
Cost for Students	None	None	None	None
# of Students	30	40	25	30
Application Process	Complete a Middle School Summer Camp application for the program you wish to attend and submit it DIRECTLY to the college. Space is limited so apply as soon as possible.			
Application Deadline	As soon as possible	May 31, 2006 or until filled	May 19, 2006 or until filled	May 26, 2006 or until filled
Send Application To	Carroll College c/o Jack Oberweiser 1601 N Benton Ave Helena MT 59625-0002	Marilyn Dutton, Coordinator Dawson Community College Box 421 Glendive MT 59330	Darren Pitcher, Director of Student Services Miles Community College 2715 Dickinson Miles City, MT 59301	Sheree Watson College of Engineering MSU-Bozeman PO Box 173820 Bozeman MT 59717-3820
Transportation – pick-up sites	Pick-up and drop-off sites will be determined by where the students attending the camp live. Specific transportation information will be provided by the college once a student is accepted to the camp.			
Camp Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Field trips to Park Lake, Trout Creek and Grizzly Gulch Mine ✓ Overnight camping with music and campfire talks ✓ Test water quality and mineral analysis at local mining area ✓ Create maps using GPS and survey instruments ✓ Study insects, amphibians, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Going through all the parts of an entire college semester in one week! ✓ Discovering horticulture, anatomy, business/financial literacy, computers, music, math, history, sign language, and geology ✓ Fun workshops on fly-tying, memory books, and Teddy Roosevelt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learning about Lewis and Clark Expedition through arts and crafts, journaling, food preparation, & more ✓ Global Positioning System (GPS) training and exploration activities at Pompeys Pillar ✓ Pow Wow dance demonstration ✓ Comparing Plains Indian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Investigate engineering disciplines and careers through hands-on exploration ✓ Problem solving and design using Lego Robotics ✓ Creating web pages, analyzing data - graphing and statistical analysis ✓ Field trips to observe 'real-world' engineering

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and reptiles ✓ Stream flow measurements ✓ Star-gazing and astronomy in campus observatory ✓ Outdoor scavenger hunt using GPS ✓ Hiking with flora and geology introduction ✓ Learn about college admissions, financial aid and career opportunities ✓ Visit the Holter Museum, Montana Historical Society and State Capitol ✓ Evening recreation, gym time, movies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hands-on field course ✓ Living/eating on campus ✓ Taking a trip to Medora for dinner & entertainment (Medora Musical) ✓ Lots of contact with current DCC college students ✓ Enjoying activities like hiking, swimming, foosball, whist, line dancing, folf, basketball, & more! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sign-language to modern sign language ✓ Orientation to college leadership ✓ Career awareness and career clusters presentations ✓ Tour of Fort Keogh ✓ Evening recreation, gym time, Bowling, Scavenger Hunt, BBQ etc. ✓ Activities with MCC students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evening recreation, gym time, movies, etc.
Special Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If you have one, bring a sleeping bag for an overnight camp out. ✓ If you don't have a sleeping bag, one will be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students need a sleeping bag. ✓ Some bedding is available for those without a sleeping bag. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students need a sleeping bag ✓ Some bedding is available for those without a sleeping bag 	
Campus Contact	<p>Andy Brown, Project Director (406) 459-1695 andrewjeromebrown@gmail.com</p> <p>Jack Oberweiser, Faculty (406) 447-4450 joberwei@carroll.edu</p>	<p>Marilyn Dutton, Coordinator (406) 377-9405 Marilyn_D@dawson.edu</p>	<p>Darren Pitcher, Director of Student Services (406) 874-6220 pitcherd@milescc.edu</p>	<p>Sheree Watson (406) 994-6723 swatson@coe.montana.edu</p>
GEAR UP Contact	<p>Annette Walstad (406) 444-0598 awalstad@oche.montana.edu</p>			

MGSLP Essay Contest Update by Tina Wagner, MGSLP Outreach Coordinator



The Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program (MGSLP) is pleased to announce that the 7th annual essay contest is well underway. We received a total of 888 essays from all Montana GEAR UP Schools and three of the five GEAR UP Partnership Schools. We were especially pleased with the students' creativity and attention to detail! This year, we are excited to award an additional \$1,400 dollars for a grand total of \$36,400 to be distributed to 182 winners. There will be one winner for every five students essays per grade level per school.

In early March, essays were sent off to the thirty-two volunteer readers from MGSLP, the Student Assistance Foundation, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Montana Lottery. We are looking forward to seeing the readers' comments about the returned essays, as well as determining the winners of the contest!! We will be announcing the winners of the essay contest on April 17th. MGSLP staff will be traveling around the state to award the winners of the essay contest at school awards ceremonies in the spring.

For those of you patiently awaiting the arrival of the 2004-2005 essay book, *Reflections*, we are happy to say the final proofreading has taken place, and it is on the way to the printers. We will be distributing those as soon as we get them.

This spring, 129 of our previous essay contest winners will graduate, and a total of \$38,000 is available to them through their scholarships! We are anxiously waiting to see how many of them will continue their education and where! Currently we have a 60 percent college-going rate of essay contest graduates. Amazing!

Welcome Sharon Heigh to the MGSLP Programs Team!

The Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program (MGSLP) is also excited to announce that Sharon Heigh has joined the Programs team. Sharon will be working closely with Tina Wagner in her outreach efforts as well as on the essay contest. Sharon has worked for MGSLP for nine years, most recently as a customer service representative in the Client Services Unit. She said she is excited about her new position, as she likes working with kids! She has been a volunteer reader for the essay contest for many years and is looking forward to seeing behind the scenes. She is a 1992 graduate of Carroll College and received Bachelor's Degrees in Sociology and Social Work. She has lived in Helena for 51 years (most of her life!) and in the past worked as the Director of the Florence Crittenton Home Daycare and as Site Manager of the After School Program at 4 Georgian's School. Welcome to the GEAR UP team, Sharon!



Evaluation Update

- We are in the midst of preparing our Annual Performance Report (APR) to the U.S. Department of Education. Thank you to all for responding to our data entry calls concerning GEARS. We feel confident that this year's APR will be the most accurate and complete report we've submitted to date – and we couldn't do it without you!
- Please continue to enter activity data into GEARS as you complete activities. The database will not be "frozen" as it was in the past. However, please make new entries for all your activities, even if they are "continuing" activities such as drop-in tutoring.
- This spring, Changhua Wang, Judith Devine, and Eve McDermitt of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) will be visiting six schools as part of the evaluation of Montana GEAR UP. Judith and Eve will be visiting three schools in the West around the time of our Liaisons meeting, and Changhua will visit three schools in the East in late April. These site visits will help us 1) understand how the GEAR UP project is operating at the site level; 2) identify technical needs for meeting GEAR UP goals and objectives; 3) provide technical assistance to strengthen evaluation efforts, including interpreting and using the evaluation results; and 4) to identify exemplary or effective practices that could be replicated. NWREL has been a great partner to Montana GEAR UP. Please help us welcome them!

GEAR UP 2006 Summer Programs

Attention students! What are you doing this summer? With GEAR UP, your Montana summer is going to be hot...with opportunities to learn! Montana GEAR UP is proud to offer several exciting options for our students for the 2006 summer break.

Middle School Academic Enrichment Summer Camps



Montana GEAR UP will fund four academic enrichment summer camps during the summer of 2006 for GEAR UP students entering grades 7, 8, and 9 in Fall 2006. Camps will be located on the college campuses of Carroll College in Helena, Miles Community College in Miles City, Dawson Community College in Glendive, and Montana State University in Bozeman. See the "At-A-Glance" section in this newsletter for more information about each camp. As there will be approximately 2300 GEAR

UP students going into 7th, 8th, and 9th grades this fall, please encourage your students to sign-up for the camp of their choice as soon as possible. Space is limited, but there is no cost for the student! More information, as well as summer program brochures, will be sent to your schools directly from the participating colleges. This material should be arriving at your school in early April.

High School Summer Programs

Montana GEAR UP is working with Montana State University—Northern and The University of Montana in Missoula to develop two unique summer program options for high school students. Some general information and program dates are listed below, and more information is forthcoming:



Montana State University—Northern will host a Quantum Learning "SuperCamp" for GEAR UP students entering the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in the Fall of 2006. The dates of the SuperCamp are August 2-5.

The University of Montana—Missoula will host a GEAR UP "Summer Bridge" program for graduated seniors (students graduating this May) to assist with the transition from high school to college. The program will be open to all students (not just those planning to attend UM) and enrollment will be limited to 30 students.

The dates for the summer bridge program are June 25-28.

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Janice Kirkpatrick, Scholarship Coordinator 444-0638, jkirkpatrick@mgslp.state.mt.us	Andrea Rankin, Program Manager 444-0674, arankin@oche.montana.edu	National GEAR UP website: www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/
	Linda Safty, School Grant Manager 444-0848, lsafty@oche.montana.edu	National Council for Community & Education Partnerships (NCCEP) site: www.edpartnerships.org/
	Tina Wagner, Financial Aid Outreach 444-0350, twagner@mgslp.state.mt.us	

